



plains spadefoot

Scaphiopus bombifrons

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Amphibia
Order:	Anura
Family:	Pelobatidae

Features

The plains spadefoot ranges up to 2 1/8 inches long. Spadefoots, unlike true toads, have nearly smooth, moist skin without distinct paratoid glands (seen as lumps under the skin). They are called "spadefoots" because of the digging tubercle ("spade") on each hind foot. Spadefoots usually are brown or gray, with a few rust colored bumps on their backs. They have a single black (not brown) wedge-shaped spade on the back of each foot. They have vertically elliptical pupils (like cats). Plains spadefoots have a bump on the forehead between the eyes.

Natural History

Spadefoots have skin secretions that may produce severe allergic reactions. They might be found in open grasslands, prairies, and open floodplains. Preferred foods of spadefoots include beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, ants, and other small insects. They live most of their lives underground, coming to the surface during rains or periods of high humidity. Plains

spadefoots breed in Iowa in late May through July in temporary pools. The call is a loud, toneless quack. They are adapted for survival in dry climates - their tadpoles are known to become cannibals, so they grow and develop faster in rapidly drying pools. Plains spadefoots are found in the western tier of counties in the loess hills.

Habitats

temporary water supplies

Iowa Status

common, native

Iowa Range

western edge of Iowa

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.